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SKT. VRDH_2 ‘HURT, DAMAGE, CUT’ *

Abstract:

The present paper deals with the origin of the late Sanskrit root $\text{vr}dh_2$ ‘hurt, cut’, which is explained as extracted from the compound $\text{vy-r}dh_2$ ‘be deprived of smth., be precluded from smth., lose’, with the subsequent simplification of the difficult sequence $\text{vy}r\text{-} \rightarrow \text{vr}\text{-}$.

The late root $\text{vr}dh_2$, homonymous with $\text{vr}dh_1$ ‘grow, increase’, is registered in Dhātupāṭha (X 112, ‘*chedana-pūraṇayoh*’) and located by Sanskritists in the Epics and some classical texts (cf. BÖHTLINGK/ROTH PW VI, 790ff.). The meaning of this root is usually rendered, apparently after BÖHTLINGK (‘abschneiden’), as ‘cut’. The *-ta*-participle of $\text{vr}dh_2$ occurs in the Mahā-Bhārata (see OBERLIES 2003: 517, where this verb is translated as ‘cut, hurt’):

(Mbh. 12.74.8ab)

vrddham (v.ll. *viddham*, *dvidhā*, crit.ed. ⁺*vyrddham*) *rāṣṭraṃ bhavati kṣatriyasya, brahma kṣatraṃ yatra virudhyate ha*

‘The kingdom of the Kṣatriya, where the Brahmana is opposed to the Kṣatriya, **becomes ruined.**’

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The same root is said to appear in a few nominal derivatives: *vardhaka-*, *vardhaki(n)-* ‘carpenter’ (Ep., Cl.), *śmaśru-wardhaka-* ‘barber’ [= ‘beard-cutter’] (Rām.) and *nābhi-wardhana-* ‘cutting of the navel-string’ (ManuSmṛ. 2.29).

The etymology of *vr̥dh₂* has not received satisfactory explanation thus far (see MAYRHOFFER, KEWA III, 157; EWAia II, 521).¹ The meaning hardly allows for connection with *vr̥dh₁* ‘grow, increase’.²

First let it be noted that the translation ‘cut’, which opens the list of meanings of *vr̥dh₂*, seems to belong to the periphery of its semantics. The Mbh. passage quoted above rather suggests the translation ‘hurt, damage, destroy, ruin’. A carpenter (*vardhaka-*, *vardhaki(n)-*, on the assumption that these nouns belong here) not only cuts, but also (or even predominantly) trims and joins (pieces of wood), creating new objects. In any case, the meanings ‘hurt, destroy’ (which are present, for instance, in *vr̥ddha-*, attested in the Mbh.) and ‘do carpenter’s work’ can hardly be reconciled within one single lexeme. Cutting underlies the basic meaning of *wardhana-* in *nābhi-wardhana-*, but even here a possibility for an alternative interpretation remains open: ‘cutting of the navel-string’ suggests in fact its removal and destruction. Note also that *chedana-* in the Indian lexicographic description of the meaning of this root (*‘chedana-pūranayoh’*) refers not only to cutting, but also to splitting, breaking, destruction. Thus, *vr̥dh₂* rather denotes hurting, damaging activities, usually violating the physical integrity of the object.

It seems that the editors of the Poona critical edition of the Mahā-Bhārata were on the right way towards the explanation of the origin of *vr̥dh₂* when conjecturing **vyṛddham* for *vr̥ddham*. Specifically, *vr̥dh₂* may originate in the compounded root *vy-r̥dh*, meaning ‘be deprived of smth., be precluded from smth., lose’.³

1. BURROW’S (1979: 47) explanation of this root as an extension of Indo-European **wer-* ‘to cut’ (unattested in Sanskrit but allegedly preserved in Pkt. *nivvarai* ‘cuts’) does not seem convincing.

2. WHITNEY’S (1885: 165) short remark concluding the lemma *vr̥dh* ‘grow’ (“Compare √ *rdh*. The asserted √ *vr̥dh* ‘cut’ (used only of the navel-string) rests on a too narrow foundation to be admitted; it is probably a specialized application of this root”) is unclear (this root = *vr̥dh*? *rdh*?) and lacks argumentation.

3. For the meaning and syntax of this compound, see OERTEL 1926: 130f.; GONDA 1951: 26; KULIKOV 2001: 276f.; see also KRICK 1982: 540, fn. 1469 on the opposition *vyṛddhi-* ~ *saṃṛddhi-* (= “Dis-” ~ “Reintegration”).

The simplification of the difficult sequence *vyr-* → *vṛ-* is attested already in late Vedic, noticed for the Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa by DEBRUNNER (1957 [AiG, Nachtr. zu Bd. I]: 149),⁴ who groups this form with other instances of the loss of *y*, such as *tryeṇī* / *trenī* ‘an drei Seiten bunt’ (WACKERNAGEL [AiG I], 267f., §232a). DEBRUNNER apparently noticed only those attestations of *vṛ°* (← *vyr°*) which crept into editions, as is the case with three forms in the Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa listed below. In fact, however, *v[y]ṛdh* occurs in some other late Vedic and post-Vedic texts as well, attested among variant readings in manuscripts or even as the only reading.

In the Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa, *vṛ°* appears instead of *vyr°* in the -*ya*-present *v[y]ṛdhyate* (2x: PB 6.7.14, 15) and in the -*ta*-participle *v[y]ṛddha-* (PB 6.9.26),⁵ cf.:

(PB 6.7.15)

yadi pratihartāvacchidyate, paśubhir yajamāno vṛdhyate

‘If the Pratiharta is hurt, the sacrificer is deprived of his cattle.’

All other occurrences of *vi* + *ṛdhya-te* in the PB (9x: PB 9.8.16; 9.9.13; 16.5.2; 6.1; 8.7; 131.2; 18.11.1-3), as well as the second attestation of the -*ta*-participle (*vṛddham vā* PB 6.9.23), have the regular *vyr°*.

A few occurrences of *vṛ*-forms appear in the Sūtras. The -*ya*-present *v[y]ṛdhyate* occurs in VaikhŚS 1.19:19.16, as one of the variant readings (ms. T reads *vā vṛdhyate*; other attested readings are (*vā*) *vṛdhyate*, *vāpyadhyate*, *°vāpyṛdhyate*). The -*ta*-participle *v[y]ṛddha-* is attested, among variant readings, in ĀpDhS 1.28.4 (*ativyapahāro v[y]ṛddho bhavati*; mss. have *vṛddho*, *vṛddho* and *viruddho*). VaitS 8.3 has the correct *vyr°* in *vṛddhi-* ‘mishap’ in all mss. (*ādhānād vṛddhiś ced* ...), but its quotation in the comm. on KātyŚS 4.11.1 has a *vṛ°*-form instead (*ādhānād vṛddhihāniś ced* ...) (see ed. GARBE, p. 64, crit. notes ad loc.). Finally, *vṛddhau* (loc.sg. of *v[y]ṛddhi-*) appears in SVB 3.9.5, in ed. BURNELL, for which ed. SHARMA (qualifying ed. BURNELL as “full of misprints”) reads *vṛddhau*, with no variant readings.

4. See also KULIKOV 2001: 272, fn. 836.

5. Note that all the three forms are found in book 6.

The substitution $vyr^\circ \rightarrow vr^\circ$ was not the only way to deal with the sequence $vyr-$. At MānŚS 1.6.5.1, several mss. have *vyadhyamāna-* for *vyṛdhyamāna-*. Another possibility is attested in ĀpDhS 1.28.4 *virud-dho* (mentioned above). Finally, a variety of solutions are exhibited by the mss. of the Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa quoted in ed. RAGHU VIRA/LOKESH CHANDRA. We find in mss. (by order of appearance in text):

vyiriddhyante (JB 2.221:7)
virudhyante (JB 2.221:9)
viridhyante (JB 2.225:6)
vīṛddhi- (JB 3.4:6)
vīriddhi- (JB 3.4:6)
vīriddhi- (JB 3.4:9)
vīriddhi-, vīruddhi- (JB 3.4:11)
viraddh[a]-, vīriddh[a]- (JB 3.279:1)

Yet another way to transform $vyr-$ is found in the Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa. In GB 2.1.16, mss. twice read *vivṛdhyate* (for which ed. GAASTRA conjectures $^+vyrḍhyate$), cf.:

(GB 2.1.16:153.12-13)
indriyeṇa vā eṣa vīryeṇā vivṛdhyate [ed. $^+vyrḍhyate$], *yasya pitā pitāmahaḥ somaṃ na pibati*
 ‘The one whose father (and) grandfather does not drink soma is deprived of power and energy.’⁶

Most likely, the sequence vyr° was first simplified to vr° ; then the preverb was secondarily restored.

For convenience, the variant readings attested in texts are summarized below:

$vyr^\circ \rightarrow$ vr°
 vya°
 $viri^\circ$
 $vyiri^\circ$
 $viru^\circ$

6. Cf. TS 2.2.1.4 *néndriyéna vīryeṇa vy ṛdhyate* ‘... he is not deprived of power and energy’. On this passage and the meaning of *indriyám vīryam*, see GONDA 1987: 117f.

vy_{r̥}° ➔ vira°
 vī_{r̥}°
 vīri°
 vīru°
 viv_{r̥}°

To sum up, we find ten variants, substituting for the original vy_{r̥}d(d)h°, which suggest both phonetic processes (vocalisation *r̥* ➔ *ri*, *ru*, *ra*, *a* and/or *y* ➔ *ī*, *yi*) and semantic adaptation of the resulting sequences to the existing roots or compounds (vr̥dh ‘grow, increase’, vi-rudh ‘obstruct; be opposed’).

The character of this irregular variation clearly points to the phonetic, rather than graphic, nature of the phenomenon in question. Facing the difficulties in pronouncing the sequence vy_{r̥}°, the copyists may have tried different ways to resolve it. Most of these solutions had little chance to survive, being clearly awkward and ungrammatical (cf. vyiri°, vī_{r̥}°, vīru°). By contrast, the v_{r̥}-variants could at least be considered morphologically acceptable, being formally identical with the derivatives of the homonymous root vr̥dh₁. Thus, the root vr̥dh₂ could be extracted from such forms as v[y]r̥dhyate, v[y]r̥ddha- and v[y]r̥ddhi-, the latter two of which are homonymous with the corresponding derivatives of vr̥dh₁, vr̥ddha- ‘grown, increased’, and vr̥ddhi- ‘growth, increase’.

The semantics of some derivatives of vr̥dh₂ can be directly traced to the meaning ‘deprive of smth.’ (nābhi-varḍhana- ‘depriving of the navel-string’; śmaśru-varḍhaka- ‘barber’ = ‘the one who deprives of beard’). As for the semantic change ‘deprive of smth.’ ➔ ‘hurt, destroy, ruin; cut (away)’, it could be supported by the influence of two phonologically similar verbal roots denoting hurting activities, vadh ‘slay, kill’ and vyadh ‘pierce’ (cf. esp. the zero grade derivatives such as the -ya-present vídhyati ‘pierces’ and -ta-participle viddhā- ‘pierced’); these verbal roots may also be responsible for the rise of the ‘carpenter’-derivatives. Another form that might have contributed to the establishing of this new verbal root is vadhrī- (RV +) ‘eunuch’, which could easily be associated with the sense of vy-r̥dh ‘deprive of [manly force / membrum virile]’.

Abbreviations

ĀpDhS	Āpastamba-Dharma- Sūtra	Mbh.	Mahā-Bhārata
Cl.	Classical Sanskrit	PB	Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa
Ep.	Epic Sanskrit	Rām.	Rāmāyaṇa
GB	Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa	SVB	Sāmavidhāna- Brāhmaṇa
JB	Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa	TS	Taittiriya-Saṃhitā
KātyŚS	Kātyāyana-Śrauta-Sūtra	VaikhŚS	Vaikhānasa-Śrauta- Sūtra
MānŚS	Mānava-Śrauta-Sūtra		
ManuSmṛ.	Manu-Smṛiti	VaitS	Vaitāna-Sūtra

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